

RI Keys to Quality Accreditation Project Application Package Section I - General Information

Project Submission Date (*Due March 8, 2002*):

Primary Applicant/Local School District
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Contact Person and Title

Address

Phone, Fax and E-Mail

<i>Superintendent's Signature</i>

<i>Special Education Director's Signature</i>

Community Partner/Early Care and Education Program

Contact Person and Title

Address

Phone, Fax and E-Mail

<i>Program Director's Signature</i>

Community Partner/Early Care and Education Program

Contact Person and Title

Address

Phone, Fax and E-Mail

<i>Program Director's Signature</i>

Copy this page as needed for additional community partners.

Statement of Assurance

By making this application, the applying programs do, hereby, commit to Keys to Quality Accreditation Project participation and adherence to the following.

Keys to Quality Accreditation Project Goals

1. *High Quality* - enhancing quality experiences that all young children (both with and without disabilities) receive in all programs by supporting the NAEYC accreditation process.
2. *Inclusion* - increasing the quantity of inclusive options in local school districts and community programs and the quality of these options through effective teamwork among all staff and families involved in services to children with disabilities.
3. *Community Partnerships and Program Continuity* - promoting partnerships between community programs and local school districts to provide better continuity as children transition from community-based early childhood programs to public school programs.
4. *Family Involvement* - increasing the knowledge of families of young children about high quality early childhood programs and expanding opportunities for families to be meaningfully involved in these programs.
5. *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* - developing systematic change by strengthening the knowledge base about the benefits of developmentally appropriate practice for all young children.

Local Site Composition Requirements

Local sites must be a collaborative community team representing a three (3) way partnership among programs serving children ages birth through five including:

1. at least one *local school district kindergarten* which provides inclusive services for children both with and without disabilities.
2. at least one *local school district preschool program*. This can be:
 - a. a preschool or Even Start program serving children both with and without disabilities and/or
 - b. a self-contained early childhood special education program, **if** the district is using community-based early childhood program options for preschool children with disabilities.
3. at least one *community-based early care and education program* serving children both with and without disabilities
 - a. These include early care and education programs and/or Head Start programs.
 - b. Community programs which participate in this project must be receiving on-site services for children with disabilities from the local school district.

Expectations for Local Sites

1. Make application for project participation in a way that demonstrates meeting project criteria as stated herein.
2. Engage in the NAEYC self-study and validation visit process, completing the process within 18 months unless extenuating circumstances require timeline extension.
3. Within four (4) months of becoming a Keys to Quality site, schedule a visit for the Keys to Quality TA staff assigned to your site to become familiar with your program, to provide you with TA on planning your self-study and to work with you in assessing your training and TA needs so that an individualized TA Plan can be developed for your site.
4. No later than five (5) months after becoming a Keys to Quality site, complete the project Tasks and Timelines form and submit it to Keys to Quality project staff.
5. Participate in project training and TA activities (e.g., mandatory brown box openings and relevant training and TA events). It is important for sites to have a minimum of one staff member attend each Keys to Quality multi-site training. This is a clear demonstration of a site's professional commitment.
6. Collect and submit project progress tracking and evaluation data as requested. Participate as requested in the Keys to Quality Third Party Evaluation process, e.g., via survey, interview, focus group, etc.
7. For one year after the end project participation, be available to serve as a coach/resource to one other site going through the accreditation process. Sites may choose to be coaches for more than one year.
8. Prior to submitting your site's program description which signals completion of the self-study process and triggers scheduling your validation visit, schedule a visit for the Keys to Quality TA staff assigned to your site to provide you TA on completing this material and to help you prepare for the validation visit.
9. Notify Keys to Quality staff at two points related to the validation visit: (a) as soon as your visit is scheduled to inform the project of your visit date and (b) when you have received the Commission Findings resulting from your validation visit, sending a copy to project staff.

What are criteria for site selection through the competitive selection process?

Department Criteria

1. Submit an appropriately completed application to participate in the Keys to Quality Project as a collaborative community team (including both school district programs and community partners). Each application must include at least one public school kindergarten and preschool program and at least one community partner in which 1 or more local school district children with disabilities are on-site school services in collaboration with community partner staff in accordance with the IEP. Examples of community partners include a child care program, a Head Start program, etc.
2. Have good family relationships as documented in the application.
3. Have administrative and instructional staff support for going through the accreditation process as documented in the application.
4. Provide inclusive programs for children with disabilities. The programs must each include children with disabilities who have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or, for infants and toddlers, Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs).

5. Complete the accreditation self-study Program Description and apply through the Keys to Quality Project to NAEYC for validation no later than two years after being accepted into the project, unless extenuating circumstances require timeline extension.
6. Upon receiving accreditation, submit the yearly end-of-year report on page 281 of the Guide to Accreditation (white book) to NAEYC with a copy to the Keys to Quality Project.
7. In addition to these criteria,
 - first priority - communities that have not yet participated in the project
 - second priority - sites from previous Rounds that had extenuating circumstances necessitating their dropping out of the project temporarily. These sites may reapply as individual sites as opposed to community teams, because these sites have already demonstrated meeting the community team criteria.
 - third priority - communities that already have project participants that want to increase the number of school district and community partner programs. Preference will be given to sites demonstrating a commitment to having multiple community partners.

NAEYC Criteria

1. serve a minimum of 10 children within the age group and have a minimum of 2 staff.
2. have been in operation for at least one year prior to receipt of accreditation.
3. be licensed/approved by the appropriate state/federal agency.
4. if all same-age programs are in one school building (e.g. all Kindergartens), pursue accreditation and self-study process together (however, early childhood special education programs can be considered separately).
5. for early care and education programs, if one component of the program applies for accreditation (e.g. a preschool program), then the entire program must apply (e.g. in addition, infant and toddler program, after school care, etc.).

Statement of Assurances Signatures

Local School District

Signature (Superintendent)

Date

Signature (Special Education Director)

Date

Community Partner

Signature (Program Director)

Date

Program Name: _____

Copy this page as needed for additional community partners.

Community Partner

Signature (Program Director)

Date

Program Name: _____

Community Partner

Signature (Program Director)

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